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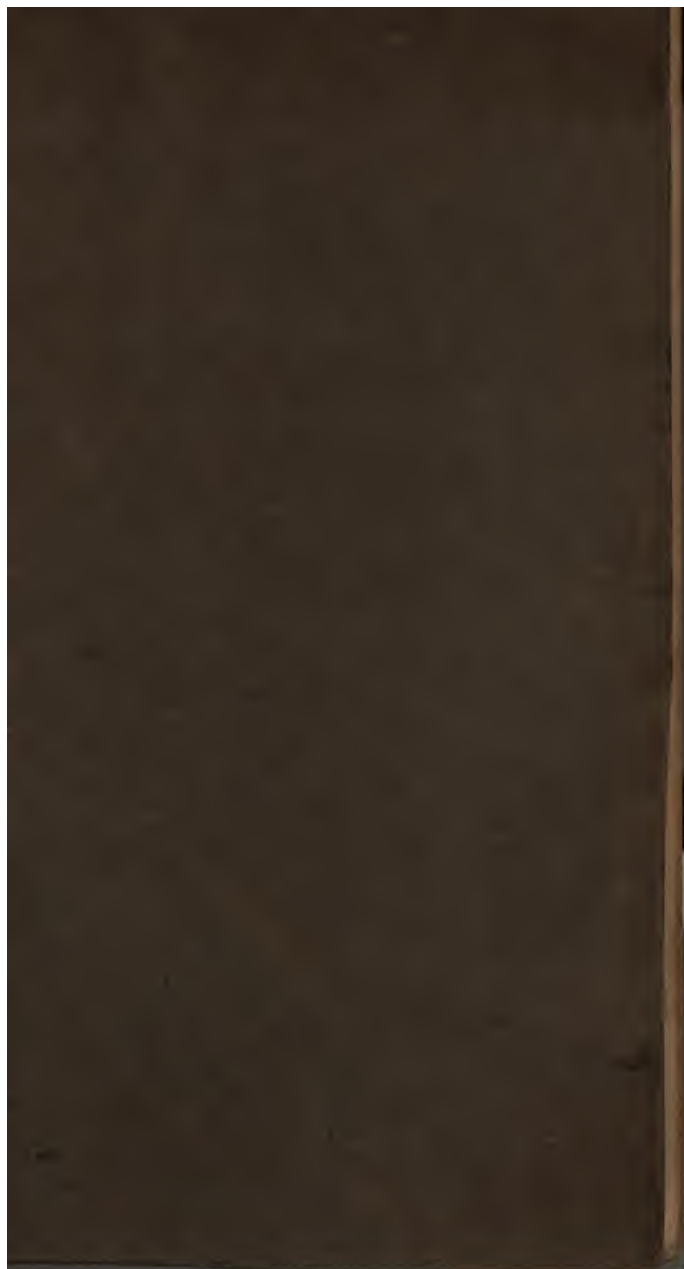
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27-95

✓. 54. 1818.  
THE

# DIVERSIONS OF THE FIELD,

CALLED

## SPORTING,

INCONSISTENT WITH THE MORALITY OF THE  
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS.

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“To say we love God, and, at the same time, to exercise cruelty toward the least creature, is a contradiction in itself.”—*J. Woolman.*

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EXTRACTED FROM

“CLARKSON'S PORTRAITURE OF QUAKERISM.”

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE following extracts are more particularly recommended to the serious attention of those persons whose benevolence towards mankind is shown by their numerous acts of mercy; and who, it may be said, almost unaccountably, appear to have little or no regard to the sufferings of other animals; who spend a considerable portion of their time in killing them for amusement, and frequently cause them to suffer for hours before they die. Let such people reflect on the inconsistency of their conduct; and surely, if they do, they must be aware that they do not deserve the character of thoroughly merciful men.

*London, 3rd Sept. 1827.*

being returned, and some of  
unwounded to the theatre, as  
we found some persons  
and it being by their num-  
ber, and when it was in  
the theatre, it was in the  
middle of the stage of which  
I had a complete view, and  
the hall of the theatre was  
filled with people, and  
we were in the middle of  
the theatre, and of their  
singing, it was a very fine  
singing, and some of the

THE  
DIVERSIONS OF THE FIELD,  
&c.

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SECTION I.

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*Diversions of the Field forbidden.*

THE diversions of the field are usually followed by people, without any consideration whether they are justifiable either in the eye of morality or of reason. Men receive them as the customs of their ancestors, and they are therefore not likely to entertain doubts concerning their propriety. The laws of the country also sanction them; for we find regulations and qualifications on the subject. Those, also, who attend these diversions, are so numerous, and their rank, and station, and character are often such, that they sanction them again by their example; so that few people think of making



any inquiry, how far they are allowable as pursuits.

But though this general thoughtlessness prevails upon the subject, and though many have fallen into these diversions, as into the common customs of the world, yet benevolent and religious individuals have not allowed them to pass unnoticed, nor been backward in their censures and reproofs.

It has been matter of astonishment to some, how men, who have the powers of reason, can waste their time in galloping after dogs, in a wild and tumultuous manner, to the detriment often of their neighbours, and to the hazard of their own lives; or how men, who are capable of high intellectual enjoyments, can derive pleasure, so as to join in shouts of triumph, on account of the death of a harmless animal; or how men, who have organic feelings, and who know that other living creatures have the same, can make an amusement of that, which puts brute animals to pain.

Good poets have spoken the language of enlightened nature upon this subject. Thomson, in his *Seasons*, introduces the diversions of the field in the following manner:

“ Here the rude clamour of the sportsman’s joy,  
The gun fast-thund’ring, and the winded horn,  
Would tempt the Muse to sing the rural game.”

But further on he observes,

“ These are not subjects for the peaceful Muse,  
Nor will she stain with such her spotless song;  
Then most delighted, when she social sees  
The whole mix'd animal creation round  
Alive and happy. 'Tis not joy to her  
This falsely cheerful barbarous game of death.”

Cowper, in his *Task*, in speaking in praise of the country, takes occasion to express his disapprobation of one of the diversions in question:

“ They love the country, and none else, who seek  
For their own sake its silence and its shade;  
Delights, which who would leave that has a heart  
Susceptible of pity, or a mind  
Cultur'd, and capable of sober thought,  
For all the savage din of the swift pack,  
And clamours of the field? Detested sport!  
That owes its pleasure to another's pain,  
That feeds upon the sobs and dying shrieks  
Of harmless Nature, dumb, but yet endued  
With eloquence, that agonies inspire,  
Of silent tears, and heart-distending sighs!  
Vain tears, alas! and sighs that never find  
A corresponding tone in jovial souls!”

In these sentiments of the poets, the Quakers, as a religious body, have long joined. George Fox specifically reprobated hunting and hawking, which were the field-diversions

of his own time. He had always shown a tender disposition to brute animals, by reprov-  
ing those who had treated them improperly in  
his presence. He considered these diversions  
as unworthy of the time and attention of men,  
who ought to have much higher objects of pur-  
suit. He believed, also, that real Christians  
could never follow them; for a Christian was a  
renovated man, and a renovated man could not  
but know the works of creation better than to  
subject them to his abuse.

Edward Burroughs, who lived at the same  
time, and was an able minister of the Society,  
joined George Fox in his sentiments with re-  
spect to the treatment of animals. He con-  
sidered that man in the fall, or the apostate  
man, had a vision so indistinct and vitiated, that  
he could not see the animals of the creation as  
he ought; but that the man who was restored,  
or the spiritual Christian, had a new and clear  
discernment concerning them, which would  
oblige him to consider and treat them in a pro-  
per manner.

This idea of George Fox, and of Edward  
Burroughs, seems to have been adopted or  
patronised by the poet Cowper:

“ Thus harmony and family accord  
Were driv’n from Paradise; and in that hour

'The seeds of cruelty, that since have swell'd  
 To such gigantic and enormous growth,  
 Were sown in human nature's fruitful soil.  
 Hence date the persecution and the pain  
 That man inflicts on all inferior kinds,  
 Regardless of their plaints. To make him sport,  
 To gratify the phrensy of his wrath,  
 Or his base gluttony, are causes good  
 And just, in his account, why bird and beast  
 Should suffer torture."——

Thus the Quakers censured these diversions from the first formation of their Society, and laid down such moral principles, with respect to the treatment of animals, as were subversive of their continuance. These principles continued to actuate all true members who were their successors; and they gave proof by their own conduct that they were influenced by them, not only in treating the different animals under their care with tenderness, but in abstaining from all diversions in which their feelings could be hurt. The diversions, however, of the field, notwithstanding that this principle of the treatment of the brute creation had been long recognised, and that no person of approved character in the Society followed them, began in time to be resorted to occasionally by the young and thoughtless members, either out of curiosity, or with a view of trying them as means of pro-

ducing pleasure. These deviations, however, from the true spirit of Quakerism, became at length known; and the Society, that no excuse might be left to any for engaging in such pursuits again, came to a resolution in one of their yearly meetings, giving advice upon the subject in the following words:

“ We clearly rank the practice of hunting and shooting for diversion with vain sports; and we believe the awakened mind may see, that even the leisure of those whom Providence hath permitted to have a competence of worldly goods, is but ill filled up with these amusements. Therefore, being not only accountable for our substance, but also for our time, let our leisure be employed in serving our neighbour, and not in distressing the creatures of God for our amusement \*.”

I shall not take upon me to examine the different reasons, upon which we find the foundation of this law. I shall not inquire how far a man's substance, or rather his talent, is wasted or misapplied, in feeding a number of dogs in a costly manner, while the poor of the neighbourhood may be starving, or how far the galloping after these is, in the eye of Christianity,

a misapplication of a person's time. I shall adhere only to that part of the argument, how far a person has a right to make a pleasure\* of that which occasions pain and death to the animal creation: and I shall show in what manner the Quakers argue upon this subject, and how they persuade themselves that they have no right to pursue such diversions, but particularly when they consider themselves as a body of professing Christians.

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\* The Quakers, and the poet Cowper likewise, in their laudable zeal for the happiness of the brute creation, have given an improper description of the nature of the crime of these diversions. They have made it to consist in a man's deriving pleasure from the sufferings of the animals in question; whereas it should have been made to consist in his making a pleasure of a pursuit which puts them to pain. The most abandoned sportsman, it is to be presumed, never hunts them because he enjoys their sufferings. His pleasure arises from considerations of another nature.

SECTION II.


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*Diversions of the field judged, first, by the morality of the Old Testament.*

THE Quakers usually try the lawfulness of field diversions, which include hunting and shooting, by two standards; and, first, by the morality of the Old Testament.

They believe, in common with other Christians, that men have a right to take away the lives of animals for their food. The great Creator of the universe, to whom every thing that is in it belongs, gave to Noah and his descendants a grant or charter for this purpose. In this charter no exception was made. Hence, wild animals are included in it equally with the tame. And hence, a hare may as well be killed, if people have occasion for food, as a chicken or a lamb.

They believe, also, that when the Creator of the universe gave men dominion over the whole brute creation, or delivered this creation into their hands, he intended them the right of destroying such animals as circum-





stances warranted them in supposing would become injurious to themselves. The preservation of themselves, which is the first law of nature, and the preservation of other animals under their care, created this new privilege.

But though men have the power given them over the lives of animals, there is a condition in the same charter, that they shall take them with as little pain as possible to the creatures. If the death of animals is to be made serviceable to men, the least they can do in return is to mitigate their sufferings while they expire. This obligation the Supreme Being imposed upon those, to whom he originally gave the charter, by the command of not eating their flesh while the life's blood was in it. The Jews obliged all their converts to religion, even the Proselytes of the Gate, who were not considered to be so religious as the Proselytes of the Covenant, to observe what they called the seventh commandment of Noah, or that "they should not eat the member of any beast that was taken from it while it was alive\*." This

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\* It seems almost impossible that men could be so depraved as to take flesh to eat from a poor animal while alive; and yet, from the law enjoined to Proselytes of the Gate, it is probable that it was the case. Bruce, whose Travels into Abyssinia are gaining ground in credit, asserts that such customs obtained there. And the Har-



law, therefore, of blood, whatever other objects it might have in view, enjoined that, while men were engaged in the distressing task of taking away the life of an animal, they should respect its feelings, by abstaining from torture or all unnecessary pain.

“ On Noah, and in him on all mankind,  
 The charter was conferr'd, by which we hold  
 The flesh of animals in fee, and claim  
 O'er all we feed on pow'r of life and death.  
 But read the instrument and mark it well.  
 Th' oppression of a tyrannous control  
 Can find no warrant there. Feed, then, and yield  
 Thanks for thy food. Carnivorous, through sin,  
 Feed on the slain, but spare the living brute!”

COWPER.

From this charter, and from the great condition annexed to it, the Quakers are of opinion that rights and duties have sprung up,—rights on behalf of animals, and duties on the part of men; and that a breach of these duties, however often or however thoughtlessly it may take place, is a breach of a moral law. For this charter did not relate to those animals only which lived in the particular country of the

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leian Miscellany, vol. vi. p. 126, in which is a modern account of Scotland, written in 1670, states the same practice as having existed in our own island.

Jews, but those in all countries wherever Jews might dwell. Nor was the observance of it confined to the Jews only, but it was to extend to the Proselytes of the Covenant and of the Gate. Nor was the observance of it confined to these proselytes; but it was to extend to all nations, because all animals of the same species are, in all countries, organized alike, and have all similar feelings; and because all animals of every kind are susceptible of pain.

In trying the lawfulness of the diversions of the field, as the Quakers do, by this charter, and by the great condition that is annexed to it, I purpose, in order to save time, to confine myself to hunting; for this will appear to be the most objectionable if examined in this manner.

It must be obvious, then, that hunting, even in the case of hares, is seldom followed for the purposes of food. It is very uncertain, in the first place, whether, in the course of the chase, they can be preserved whole, when they are taken, so as to be fit to be eaten. And, in the second, it may be observed that we may see fifty horsemen after a pack of hounds, no one of whom has any property in the pack, nor of course any right to the prey. These cannot even pretend that their object is food either for themselves or others.

Neither is hunting, where foxes are the object in view, pursued upon the principle of the destruction of noxious animals. For it may be observed that rewards are frequently offered to those who will procure them for the chase; that large woods or covers are frequently allotted them, that they may breed, and perpetuate their species for the same purpose; and that a poor man in the neighbourhood of a fox-hunter would be sure to experience his displeasure, if it were known that he had destroyed any of these animals.

With respect to the mode of destroying them in either of these cases, (which is the next consideration,) it is not as expeditious as it might be made by other means. It is, on the other hand, peculiarly cruel. A poor animal is followed, not for minutes, but frequently for an hour, and sometimes for hours, in pain and agony. Its sufferings begin with its first fear. Under this fear, perpetually accompanying it, it flies from the noise of horses and of horsemen, and the cries of dogs: it pants for breath, till the panting becomes difficult and painful: it becomes wearied even to misery, yet dares not rest: and, under a complication of these sufferings, it is at length overtaken, and often literally torn to pieces by its pursuers.

Hunting, therefore, does not appear, in the



opinion of the Quakers, to be followed for any of those purposes which alone, according to the original charter, give mankind a right over the lives of brutes. It is neither followed for food, nor for prevention of injury to man, or to the creatures belonging to him. Neither is life taken away by means of it as mercifully as it ought to be, according to the meaning of the great condition\*. But if hunting be not justifiable, when examined upon these three principles, it can never be justifiable, in the opinion of this Society, when it is followed on the principle of pleasure. All destruction of animal life, upon this last principle, must come within the charge of wanton cruelty, and be considered as a violation of a moral law.

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\* The netting of animals for food is perfectly unobjectionable upon these principles.

## SECTION III.

*Diversions of the field judged, secondly, by the morality of the New Testament.*

THE Quakers try the lawfulness of these diversions, again, by the morality of the New Testament. They adopt, in the first place, upon this occasion, the idea of George Fox and of Edward Burroughs, which has been already stated; and they follow it up in the manner which I shall now explain.

They believe that a man under the new Covenant, or one who is really a Christian, is a renovated man. As long as Adam preserved his primæval innocence, or continued in the image of his Maker, his spiritual vision was clear. When he lost this image, it became dim, short, and confused. This is the case, the Society believe, with every apostate or wicked man. He sees through a vitiated medium. He sees, of course, nothing of the harmony of the creation. He has but a confused know-

ledge of the natures and ends of things. These natures and these ends he never examines as he ought, but, in the confusion of his moral vision, he abuses and perverts them. Hence it generally happens that an apostate man is cruel to his brute. But in proportion as he is restored to the divine image, or becomes as Adam was before he fell, or in proportion as he exchanges earthly for spiritual views, he sees all things through a clearer medium. It is then, the Quakers believe, that the creation is opened to him, and that he finds the Creator has made nothing in vain. It is then that he knows the natures of things—that he estimates their uses and their ends, and that he will never stretch these beyond their proper bounds. Beholding animals in this sublime light, he will appreciate their strength, their capacities, and their feelings; and he will never use them but for the purposes intended by Providence. It is then that the creation will delight him. It is then that he will find a growing love to the animated objects of it. And this knowledge of their natures, and this love of them, will oblige him to treat them with due tenderness and respect. Hence, all animals will have a security in the breast of every Christian, or renovated man, against oppression or abuse. He will never de-

stroy them wantonly, nor put them to unnecessary pain. Now the Quakers are of opinion that every person who professes Christianity, ought to view things as the man who is renovated would view them, and that it therefore becomes them in particular, as a body of highly-professing Christians, to view them in the same manner. Hence, they uniformly look upon animals not as brute machines, to be used at discretion, but as the creatures of God, of whose existence the use and intention ought always to be considered, and to whom duties arise out of this spiritual feeling, independently of any written law in the Old Testament, or any grant or charter, by which their happiness might be secured.

The Members therefore of this Society, viewing animals in this light, believe that they are bound to treat them accordingly. Hence, the instigation of two horses by whips and spurs, for a trial of speed, in consequence of a moneyed stake, is considered by them to be criminal. The horse was made for the use of man, to carry his body and transport his burdens; but he was never made to engage in painful conflicts with other horses, on account of the avarice of his owner. Hence, the pitting together of two cocks, for a trial of victory, is



considered as equally criminal. For the cock, whatever may be his destined object among the winged creation, has been long useful to man in awakening him from unseasonable slumber, and in sounding to him the approach of day. But it was never intended that he should be employed to the injury and destruction of himself, or to the injury and destruction of his own species. In the same manner the Quakers condemn the hunting of animals except on the plea of necessity, or that they cannot be destroyed, if their death be required, in any other way. For, whatever may be their several uses, or the several ends of their existence in creation, they were never created to be so used by man, that they should suffer, and this entirely for his sport. Whoever puts animals to cruel and unnatural uses, disturbs, in the opinion of the Quakers, the harmony of creation, and offends God.

They are of opinion, in the second place, that the renovated man must have in his own benevolent spirit such an exalted sense of the benevolent spirit of the Creator, as to believe that he never constituted any part of animated nature, without assigning it its proper share of happiness during the natural time of its existence; or, that it was to have its moment,



its hour, its day, or its year of pleasure. And if this be the case, he must believe also, that any interruption of its tranquillity, without the plea of necessity, must be an innovation of its rights as a living being.

They believe also, that the renovated man, who loves all the works of the Creator, will carry every divine law, which has been revealed to him, as far as it is possible to be carried on account of a similarity of natures, through all animated creation, and particularly that law which forbids him to do to another what he would dislike to be done unto himself. Now this law is founded on the sense of bodily, and on the sense of mental, feeling. The mental feelings of men and brutes, or the reason of man and the instinct of animals, are different. But their bodily feelings are alike, and they are in their due proportions susceptible of pain. The nature, therefore, of man and of animals is alike in this particular. He can anticipate and know their feelings by his own. He cannot, therefore, subject them to any action unnecessarily, if on account of a similar construction of his own organs such an action would produce pain to himself. His own power of feeling strongly commands sympathy with all that can feel. And that general

sympathy, which arises to a man when he sees pain inflicted on the person of any individual of his own species, will arise, in the opinion of the Quakers, to the renovated man, when he sees it inflicted on the body of any brute.

THE END.



